



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1095 Vienna, 29 January 2025

EU Opening Statement

1. Dear Ambassador, the European Union and its Member States congratulate Spain on assuming its new position as the Chair of the OSCE's Forum for Security Co-operation. We thank His Excellency, Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares Bueno, for his introductory remarks and for the presentation of your priorities and agenda for the months to come.
2. We are now approaching 11 years since Russia, an OSCE participating State, invaded its peaceful neighbour and occupied the Crimean Peninsula and three years since it proceeded with its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The Russian attacks did not let up over the Christmas and New Year holidays. Yet again, numerous civilians were killed or injured by aerial strikes. It is clear that Russia's unprovoked, unjustifiable and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine remains the defining challenge in the OSCE area today and must remain at the top of our agenda, as you have rightly identified it when presenting your priorities for this Forum in the next three months.
3. We must continue to address this issue, to condemn Russia's actions in the strongest possible terms, to hold it to account for the destruction and suffering it is causing, and for the flagrant and deliberate contravention of international law, including the UN Charter, as well as the OSCE founding principles in the Helsinki Decalogue as defined by our leaders fifty years ago.
4. Our support for Ukraine in its rightful self-defence remains unwavering. As High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Kaja Kallas, said last week: 'The Ukrainians are fighting for their freedom, and ours.'
5. Mr Chair, we fully support the Spanish Chairpersonship. Discussing Responsible Military Use of New and Emerging Technologies is relevant now and in the future, as we witness their increasing impact on security and defence sectors.
6. The Women, Peace and Security agenda continues to be a vital part of the politico-military dimension and our work towards its full implementation needs to progress.

Women and girls still remain disproportionately and differently affected by wars, conflicts and crises throughout the OSCE area.

7. All these mentioned areas are important matters that we should be discussing while meeting every week, as mandated. This Forum was conceived as a unique platform for dialogue on security issues and should be utilised to its best potential.
8. Allow us now to also thank Denmark as the outgoing Chair and welcome Estonia in the new Troika. We bid farewell to Croatia leaving the Troika.
9. To conclude, dear Ambassador, let us reiterate our full support for your Chairpersonship. We count on your leadership and look forward to working with you and your entire team as the important politico-military challenges of today in the OSCE context are addressed in this key Forum.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, and GEORGIA, the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

*North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.